

Telegram from A. I. Mikoyan to the CC CPSU, and Gromyko's Response

November 8 and 9, 1962

As I already wrote [to you], the Cuban leadership is very interested in the fate of the known agreement about military aid.

They were very pleased when I said that we were ready after everything calms down to discuss it in a brotherly fashion and reach a decision. Until that happens, they will make all kinds of guesses—what changes would be introduced into the agreement and in what direction.

I consider it expedient, if the Central Committee approves it, to mention in a casual manner in one of my conversations with Fidel, speaking just as a private person, that here in Cuba, taking into account the great significance of the psychological factor which Fidel emphasized so much, I had an idea about the direction of the agreement on issues of the military cooperation that we have to jointly discuss and work out. If the solution has a character of a Soviet military base, then, as I started to realize here, it could create certain psychological and propaganda difficulties, both in your relations with Latin American countries as well as in regard to the masses of your people. I am talking about your [Castro's] legitimate acute feelings of independence and sovereignty, the feelings that you and your people exhibited so strongly during these events.

In addition, North American propaganda uses it even to a greater extent to slander you, as if you were a government dependent on the USSR.

I also think that in the political sense, it could weaken your positions in the struggle for the liquidation of the American base at Guantánamo.

Therefore, wouldn't it be better to adopt the following line: that the Cuban personnel with the assistance of our specialists will gradually start to operate all the Soviet weapons remaining in Cuba?

As these personnel become prepared, gradually the Soviet people will be replaced with the Cubans. Upon completion of a certain time period necessary to master the military technology, all Soviet personnel will be replaced by the Cuban personnel, and those Soviet experts in special areas, without whom it would be difficult for the Cuban army to function, will stay with you and work here as advisers in such number and for such a period of time as necessary. Here I also emphasized that this idea was my personal idea, and that I did not consult about it with Moscow and was only stating it in order to find out whether such a definition of the issue would be correct from the point of view of the Cuban revolution.

When you discuss this issue in the Central Committee, please pay attention to the fact that, according to the information of our ambassador and from my conversations with the Cubans, I have the impression that they consider this agreement as one that would serve the interests of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp to a larger extent than the interests of Cuba, and that in doing that they would be making their valuable contribution to the common cause of the socialist camp, and that it would give them the possibility to thank the Soviet Union in some form for its generous assistance and support of Cuba. Fidel Castro literally used these expressions in one of his conversations with our ambassador.

However, for us this form would be convenient because it would practically eliminate the possibility of all kinds of tensions if we find some differences of opinions between the sides on some issues. It corresponds to the general Soviet concept that we do not need military bases on the territory of foreign states to defend our Motherland because we rely on the gigantic power of

our missile technology with nuclear weapons, which is capable of reaching any enemy from the territory of the Soviet Union.

Please give me instructions.

November 8, 1962 A. Mikoyan

Gromyko's Response to Mikoyan

To Soviet Ambassador for comrade Mikoyan A. I.

We received your number 1787. We are preparing materials for your negotiations with our Cuban friends. In this material we will present considerations that completely correspond with your ideas. We have the same understanding [of the issue].

Without waiting for our material to reach you, you can discuss this topic with the Cubans at any time you consider it necessary.

November 9, 1962 A. Gromyko

Source: From the personal archive of Sergo A. Mikoyan, donated to the National Security Archive. Translation by Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive.